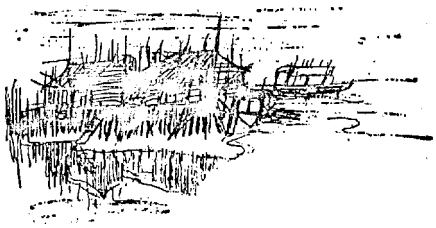
result from the struggle in Vietnam. So its stream of arms is speeded up only after we escalate our involvement in one way or another, as we did in February, 1965, by striking at North Vietnam, and last summer by hitting Haiphong's and Hanoi's installations more directly.

The official word is that the Soviet Union and its East European allies have offered to send volunteers to fight in North Vietnam but that Hanoi has politely and gratefully declined the offer. The chances are that, fearing still another escalation of the war, Moscow has in fact refrained from such an offer, and that for reasons of propaganda and diplomacy it was agreed between Moscow and Hanoi that a fiction of offer and refusal would be maintained, although not too loudly or repeatedly. An American colonel conversant with the situation put it this way: "Hanoi would like to get all those volunteers but doesn't dare to ask for them. For were she to ask Russia and her allies, she would have to invite China, too, and this she wants to avoid. It's one thing to tolerate those Chinese railroad construction men with no guns, but quite another to have a whole army of Chinese with weapons. No, not in North Vietnam."

Informed U.S. officials feel that Hanoi does not fear the Russians even if they come armed. And perhaps this is so, because Hanoi knows that Moscow is not eager to send armed men so far away, to so many risks of greater conflicts. In fact, Moscow may yet return to its pre-October, 1964, attitude even in economic matters: its large and growing investment in North Vietnam may be curtailed if things calm down in Southeast Asia; if China, for instance, should relax in its post-Mao phase and an accommodation with Mao's more sensible successors became possible.

"If this happens," a Washington observer speculated, "Khrushchev's heirs may come to believe, as Khrushchev apparently did, that North Vietnam is after all too distant from Russia, and why not make a deal with Peking, exchanging, say, that wonderful machine-tool plant in Hanoi for some far more desirable properties closer to home—in Sinkiang, for instance?"



Saigon: The Impact Of the Refugees

EDWARD B. MARKS

THE REFUGEE is a constant in Vietnam's recent history. In other times and places, the death of a ruler, the end of a war, a change in régime, or the signing of a treaty closes the chapter, or at least permits a breathing space. But upheaval has been chronic in this beleaguered land, and each crisis has brought its own wave of refugees. The current wave exceeds all previous ones in size and complexity. Striking differences are apparent when it is contrasted with the huge but relatively peaceful trek of nine hundred thousand refugees across the 17th parallel after the Geneva Accords were reached in July, 1954. "Operation Exodus," as it was called, faced in a new direction; its refugees abandoned their former lives and settled quickly on new soil. Most entered South Vietnam as complete families, often as parishes and hamlets with strong religious (usually Catholic) or secular leadership. Occupationally, they were a cross section. Above all, they came to a land where combat had ceased, with many fertile acres available for colonization.

Today's refugees, essentially rural folk, a large number of whom are also Catholic, are mainly women, children, and old men. Many were forced to flee, and relatively few have escaped in hamlet or parish groups; there is much less cohesion and leadership than there was in 1954. Finally and more significantly, most of today's refugees live tantalizingly near their former homes. Some even farm their fields by day, returning to their new haven at nightfall, and most enter government territory with the initial expectation of returning home as soon as security permits.

This uncertainty would make planning difficult even if there were more areas under Saigon's control where arable land is both available and secure. But the military realities not only limit land settlement but also create a situation in which some people have been displaced for a second or third time. Many of the refugees of a decade ago have now been uprooted once more.

Filling the Void

An example of this—happier than most—is the fate of a group of about six hundred Catholic fishermen and their families who moved in 1955 from North Vietnam to the maritime province of Binh Thuan. The Vietcong began harassing the settlers as early as 1960, but it was not until May, 1965, that the villagers, with their boats, nets, and other possessions, took off down the coast and re-established their village on a bleak, uninhabited point near Vung Tau. Here they have made a rapid comeback. The men are mainly fishing again, but some of them, as well as some of the women, are employed in construction work or service trades in Vung Tau. The priest who came with them from the North still guides them, and most of the children are in school.

The security of some two thou-